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Ask For: Mrs Hazel Mallett
Your Ref:
Our Ref: KCC/DA/0108/2024
Date: 14 August 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017
SCREENING OPINION UNDER REGULATION 8

APPLICATION NO: KCC/DA/0108/2024

PROPOSAL: **New tunnel and associated road works for bus, cycling and pedestrian access to the east of Bluewater Shopping Centre, to link the Eastern Quarry, being developed as part of Ebbsfleet Garden City, and Bluewater shopping centre through a chalk spine which separates the two former quarries.**

LOCATION: **Land through the chalk spine under the B255 Bean Road, Bluewater Shopping Centre and Eastern Quarry, Dartford, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9ST.**

I am writing in response to your application dated 15 July 2024 in respect of the above.

I enclose the County Council's screening opinion advising that an environmental statement is not required in this instance.

Yours faithfully

Sharon Thompson
Head of Planning Applications Group

As part of the Council's commitment to equalities if you have any concerns or issues with regard to access to this information please contact us for assistance.

kent.gov.uk

Reference: KCC/DA/0108/2024

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2017

SCREENING OPINION UNDER REGULATION 8

To: KCC Major Capital Programmes
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Proposed development: New tunnel and associated road works for bus, cycling and pedestrian access to the east of Bluewater Shopping Centre, to link the Eastern Quarry, being developed as part of Ebbsfleet Garden City, and Bluewater shopping centre through a chalk spine which separates the two former quarries. Land through the chalk spine under the B255 Bean Road, Bluewater Shopping Centre and Eastern Quarry, Dartford, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9ST.

TAKE NOTICE that the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL, the County Planning Authority, under the Town and Country Planning Act, considers that the above proposed development referred to in your application dated 15 July 2024 relates to Schedule 2 development within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 *(SI 2017 No. 571) ("the 2017 Regulations")* which in this particular case **does not** constitute EIA development for the following reasons:

The proposed development comprises a new road connection between Eastern Quarry and Bluewater Shopping Centre to serve Fastrack and to provide pedestrian and cycle linkages between the two areas. The proposed development includes the construction of a tunnel (located to the north of two existing tunnels) through a section of chalk (chalk spine) below the B255 Bean Road. The tunnel would be approximately 80m long. The chalk spine separates Bluewater Shopping Centre (which sits within the former Western Quarry) from Eastern Quarry. The tunnel would have a portal hood at either end. Inside, it would be lined with concrete and contain an inner canopy and would be lit with functional and feature lighting. There would be street lighting beyond the tunnel. Running through the tunnel would be a 3.5m wide single way carriageway for the Fastrack buses to use. Alongside this on the southern side would be a 2-metre-wide footway separated from the bus lane by a 0.5m paved surface. On the northern side of the tunnel there would be a 3m wide shared use footway/cycleway also separated from the bus lane by 0.5m paved surface. The tunnel would provide connections into the existing road network to the west, along Bluewater Parkway, and to the east into Eastern Quarry development area (carried out as part of other development proposals). The proposal includes landscaping, drainage, mitigation and compensatory measures for biodiversity, including in relation to two existing tunnels which

would be retained. Construction compounds adjacent to the proposal within the Eastern Quarry area to the east of the proposal and to the west of the proposal would be temporary. Works. Works to the east of the proposal within Eastern Quarry carried out as part of other development proposals do not form part of the scheme.

The application site is not within a 'sensitive area' as defined in Part 1 Regulation 2(1).

However, the development is listed in 'Schedule 2. Paragraph 10 Infrastructure projects – (f) construction of roads and involves an area of land for the works which is over and above the respective threshold of 1.0 ha given in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2.

In these circumstances it would be Schedule 2 Development and therefore screening has been carried out to establish whether or not Environmental Impact Assessment is required. Therefore, it is necessary to consider whether the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment by taking account of the selection criteria as set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

It is noted that the application has been submitted including environmental information appropriate to the consideration of the development work proposed. This information includes a description of the development, including in particular the physical characteristics of the development and a description of the location of the development, and the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected and a description of the aspects of the environment that could potentially be affected by the development. It also includes measures that are envisaged to avoid or prevent effects on the environment and considers the potential impacts envisaged by the proposals.

Having regard to the information supplied within the planning application and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations and National Planning Policy Framework - Planning Practice Guidance, it is considered that the proposed development is **not** likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment because of its nature, size and location.

The proposed development is not within a 'sensitive area' and is not of a scale or nature that would result in wide ranging environmental effects, and would not have unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects. The extent of the works is small in scale and whilst the physical changes would have a localised visual impact and result in some loss of habitat and changes in topography, this can be adequately mitigated by the landscaping and management measures that are to be developed. The proposal includes measures to address biodiversity and ecological impacts of the proposals. Mitigation as detailed in the ecological assessments is included in relation to habitats including reedbed, and in relation to species (bats, reptile, amphibians, nesting birds and precautionary mitigation in relation to hazel dormouse). The proposal includes measures to mitigate environmental risk and control temporary construction impacts in relation to dust, vibration, lighting and noise and a Construction Environment Management Plan is to be produced. Measures are included in relation to impacts to drainage, stability, lighting, utilities and landscaping.

The proposal would result in improvements to the public transport and accessibility and is intended to provide for direct routes between Eastern Quarry developments and Bluewater providing a fast link to Ebbsfleet International to accommodate future increases to vehicular traffic as a result of development proposals in the area and to therefore reduce traffic congestion.

Therefore, the proposed development would not need to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, as defined in the above Regulations.

There are no other issues amongst those raised that indicate a likelihood of there being significant environmental effects from this proposal. Overall, with regard to the main issues identified above or in relation to any other matters raised, there is no evidence of any factors that either in isolation or in combination would necessitate EIA for this proposal.

Accordingly, the County Planning Authority considers that the development does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Under the circumstances, the planning application **does not** need to be accompanied by an environmental statement, as defined in the above Regulations. Please note that the assessment of environmental matters will form part of the normal planning application process whereby the merits of the proposals are given due consideration as well as any mitigation measures that may be secured by condition to control potential impacts upon the environment.

This decision is reached based upon the information contained in the planning application documents above and the conclusions of the accompanying supporting information. All potential environmental impacts have been considered in reaching this screening opinion decision and are not limited to the ones explicitly covered in the screening opinion. The County Council reserves the right to revisit this decision should any of those conclusions together with any further supporting information be questioned by consultees or any third party during the processing of the application.

Dated: Fourteenth day of August 2024

(Signed)……
Head of Planning Applications Group